

PROMISE to Protect

Pledge to HEAL



**We train
everyone to
prevent and
report abuse.**

2,400,627 adults trained
4,484,609 children
trained

**195 U.S. dioceses/
eparchies** have a victim
assistance coordinator to
obtain assistance and provide
support for those abused.

**We provide
outreach to
those abused.**



**We require
background
checks.**

2,390,956
background checks
for clerics, employees
and volunteers

**100% of U.S.
dioceses/eparchies**
require allegations of
sexual abuse to be reported
to public authorities.

**We report all
allegations.**



**We work
with law
enforcement.**



SO THERE IS NO DOUBT



THE CATHOLIC CHURCH'S SOLUTION TO END THE ABUSE OF CHILDREN

YOU CAN HELP

You can help prevent the abuse of children. Know the warning signs of offenders. They prefer to be with children. They go overboard touching, wrestling, or tickling children. They may give minors alcohol or drugs, or show them pornography. They allow children to break the rules. Offenders act as if the rules do not apply to them.

If you observe an adult who is not behaving appropriately with children, speak up. Let someone know what you saw. You are not accusing anyone of anything. You are letting someone know you care, are watching, and are concerned that no harm is done to a child.

YOU CAN GET HELP

Abuse is never the fault of the victim. It is always the responsibility of the offender. The reality is that most victims of abuse know their abuser. One in four females and one in six males report being abused as a minor.

If you or someone you know is a victim of abuse there are things you can do even if the abuse happened years ago. Call the police to report the abuse. If the abuser was in a position of authority in an organization, report the abuse to that organization. Call an abuse crisis hotline.

If it happened in a Catholic church or school, contact the Victim Assistance Coordinator for the diocese. If you need help contacting the right person go to usccb.org or call 202-541-5413.

THE CHARTER

In Dallas in June of 2002, the bishops of the United States adopted the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People. The Charter is the plan of action developed by the bishops to address the clergy scandal.

PART ONE - TO PROMOTE HEALING AND RECONCILIATION WITH VICTIM/SURVIVORS OF ABUSE.

The wording of the Charter is very clear on the importance the bishops place on their responsibility to help victims find healing and reconciliation. It states: "The first obligation of the Church with regard to the victims is for healing and reconciliation." Outreach takes a variety of forms from extensive therapy and apology meetings, to spiritual retreats and masses for healing. In 2014, outreach was provided to 1,863 victims and their families.

PART TWO - TO GUARANTEE AN EFFECTIVE RESPONSE TO ALLEGATIONS OF SEXUAL ABUSE OF MINORS.

All dioceses are to report all allegations of sexual abuse of minors to public authorities. All clergy who have been found guilty or admitted guilt are permanently removed from ministry. There are clear standards of behavior and appropriate boundaries for all clergy, employees and volunteers

PART THREE - TO ENSURE THE ACCOUNTABILITY OF OUR PROCEDURES.

The mission of the Bishops' Committee for the Protection of Children and Young People is to advise the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops on all matters related to child and youth protection. The Secretariat of Child and Youth Protection was established in 2002 by the USCCB. The National Review Board is a consultative body that reviews the work of the Secretariat of Child and Youth Protection and advises the president of the USCCB. In addition, each diocese has a review board to advise its bishop in his assessment of allegations and in his determination of a cleric's suitability for ministry. To prove their commitment to accountability, dioceses undergo an annual audit conducted by an outside auditor.

PART FOUR - TO PROTECT THE FAITHFUL IN THE FUTURE.

Dioceses train clergy, employees and volunteers to create and maintain safe environments for children. The backgrounds of clergy, employees, and volunteers are evaluated to determine if someone should not be allowed around children and young people.

Over 2 million parish employees and volunteers, and 4.6 million children have been Safe Environment trained to recognize the behavior of offenders and what to do about it. Safe Environment training was also provided to 160,757 educators, 250,087 other employees, 35,319 priests, 16,089 deacons, and 6,503 candidates for ordination.

Background evaluations have been conducted on over 2 million parish volunteers and Church personnel who have contact with children.

Seminary screening has been tightened and transfers among dioceses of clergy who have committed abuse against minors are forbidden.



UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS

USCCB > Issues And Action > Child And Youth Protection > Child Abuse Prevention

TEN POINTS TO CREATE SAFE ENVIRONMENTS FOR CHILDREN

1. Sexual molestation is about the victim

Many people are affected when a priest abuses a minor, but the individual most impacted is the victim who has suffered a violation of trust that can affect his or her entire life. The abuser, the family of the abused, and the parish community are all affected by this sin and crime, but the primary person of concern must be the victim.

2. No one has the right to have access to children

If people wish to volunteer for the church, for example, in a parish or school, they must follow diocesan guidelines on background checks, safe environment training, policies and procedures, and codes of conduct. No one, no matter who they are, has an automatic right to be around children or young people who are in the care of the church without proper screening and without following the rules.

3. Common sense is not all that common

It is naive to presume that people automatically know boundaries so organizations and families have to spell them out. For example, no youth minister, cleric or other adult leader should be in a child's bedroom, alone with the child.

4. Child sexual abuse can be prevented

Awareness that child sexual abuse exists and can exist anywhere is a start. It is then critical to build safety barriers around children and young people to keep them from harm. These barriers come in the form of protective guardians, codes of conduct, background evaluations, policies and procedures, and safety training programs.

5. The residual effects of having been abused can last a lifetime

Those who have been abused seldom just get over it. The sense of violation goes deep into a person's psyche and feelings of anger, shame, hurt and betrayal can build long after the abuse has taken place. Some have even described the feeling as if it has scarred their soul.

6. Feeling heard leads toward healing

. Relief from hurt and anger often comes when one feels heard, when one's pain and concerns are taken seriously, and a victim/survivor

appropriate sense of rage and indignation are acknowledged. Not being acknowledged contributes to a victim's sense of being invisible, unimportant and unworthy; they are in some way revictimized.

7. You cannot always predict who will be an abuser

Experience shows that most abuse is at the hands of someone who has gained the trust of a victim/survivor and his/her family. Most abuse also occurs in the family setting. Sometimes the nicest person in the world is an abuser, and this niceness enables a false sense of trust to be created between abuser and abused.

8. There are behavioral warning signs of child abusers

Training and education help adults recognize grooming techniques that are precursors to abuse. Some abusers isolate a potential victim by giving him or her undue attention or lavish gifts. Another common grooming technique is to allow young people to participate in activities which their parents or guardians would not approve, such as watching pornography, drinking alcohol, using drugs, and excessive touching, which includes wrestling and tickling. It is also critical to be wary of age-inappropriate relationships, seen, for example, in the adult who is more comfortable with children than fellow adults. Parishes can set up rules to guide interaction between adults and children.

9. People can be taught to identify grooming behavior

which are the actions which abusers take to project the image that they are kind, generous, caring people, while their intent is to lure a minor into an inappropriate relationship. An abuser may develop a relationship with the family to increase his credibility. Abusers might show attention to the child by talking to him/her, being friendly, sharing alcohol with a minor and giving the child status by insinuating that the child is their favorite or special person. Offenders can be patient and may groom their victim, his or her family, or community for years.

10. Background checks work.

Background checks in churches, schools and other organizations keep predators away from children both because they scare off some predators and because they uncover past actions which should ban an adult from working or volunteering with children. If an adult has had difficulty with some boundaries that society sets, such as not driving while intoxicated or not disturbing the public peace, he or she may have difficulties with other boundaries, such as not hurting a child. Never forget that offenders lie.